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**LOVER'S GIFT**  
**AND**  
**CROSSING**

**BY**  
**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

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# 1

You allowed your kingly power to vanish, Shajahan, but your wish was to make imperishable a tear-drop of love.

Time has no pity for the human heart, he laughs at its sad struggle to remember.

You allured him with beauty, made him captive, and crowned the formless death with fadeless form.

The secret whispered in the hush of night to the ear of your love is wrought in the perpetual silence of stone.

Though empires crumble to dust, and centuries are lost in shadows, the

marble still sighs to the stars, "I remember."

"I remember."—But life forgets, for she has her call to the Endless: and she goes on her voyage unburdened, leaving her memories to the forlorn forms of beauty.

## 2

COME to my garden walk, my love. Pass by the fervid flowers that press themselves on your sight. Pass them by, stopping at some chance joy, which like a sudden wonder of sunset illumines, yet eludes.

For love's gift is shy, it never tells its name, it flits across the shade, spreading a shiver of joy along the dust. Overtake it or miss it for ever. But a gift that can be grasped is merely a frail flower, or a lamp with a flame that will flicker.

## 3

THE fruits come in crowds into my orchard, they jostle each other. They surge up in the light in an anguish of fullness.

Proudly step into my orchard, my queen, sit there in the shade, pluck the ripe fruits from their stems, and let them yield, to the utmost, their burden of sweetness at your lips.

In my orchard the butterflies shake their wings in the sun, the leaves tremble, the fruits clamour to come to completion.

## 4

SHE is near to my heart as the meadow-flower to the earth; she is sweet to me as sleep is to tired limbs. My love for her is my life flowing in its fullness, like a river in autumn flood, running with serene abandon-

#### 4.                   LOVER'S GIFT

ment. My songs are one with my love, like the murmur of a stream, that sings with all its waves and currents.

#### 5

I WOULD ask for still more, if I had the sky with all its stars, and the world with its endless riches; but I would be content with the smallest corner of this earth if only she were mine.

#### 6

IN the light of this thriftless day of spring, my poet, sing of those who pass by and do not linger, who laugh as they run and never look back, who blossom in an hour of unreasoning delight, and fade in a moment without regret.

Do not sit down silently, to tell the

beads of your past tears and smiles,—  
do not stop to pick up the dropped  
petals from the flowers of overnight,  
do not go to seek things that evade  
you, to know the meaning that is not  
plain,—leave the gaps in your life  
where they are, for the music to come  
out of their depths.

## 7

It is little that remains now, the rest  
was spent in one careless summer.  
It is just enough to put in a song and  
sing to you ; to weave in a flower-  
chain gently clasping your wrist ; to  
hang in your ear like a round pink  
pearl, like a blushing whisper ; to  
risk in a game one evening and utterly  
lose.

My boat is a frail small thing, not  
fit for crossing wild waves in the rain.  
If you but lightly step on it I shall



gently row you by the shelter of the shore, where the dark water in ripples is like a dream-ruffled sleep; where the dove's cooing from the drooping branches makes the noon-day shadows plaintive. At the day's end, when 'you are tired, I shall pluck a dripping lily to put in your hair and take my leave.

## 8

THERE is room for you. You are alone with your few sheaves of rice. My boat is crowded, it is heavily laden, but how can I turn you away? your young body is slim and swaying; there is a twinkling smile in the edge of your eyes, and your robe is coloured like the rain-cloud.

The travellers will land for different roads and homes. You will sit for a while on the prow of my boat, and at

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7

the journey's end none will keep you back.

Where do you go, and to what home, to garner your sheaves? I will not question you, but when I fold my sails and moor my boat I shall sit and wonder in the evening,—Where do you go, and to what home, to garner your sheaves?

## 9

WOMAN, your basket is heavy, your limbs are tired. For what distance have you set out, with what hunger of profit? The way is long, and the dust is hot in the sun.

See, the lake is deep and full, its water dark like a crow's eye. The banks are sloping and tender with grass.

Dip your tired feet into the water. The noontide wind will pass its fingers

through your hair ; the pigeons will croon their sleep songs, the leaves will murmur the secrets that nestle in the shadows.

What matters it if the hours pass and the sun sets ; if the way through the desolate land be lost in the waning light ?

Yonder is my house, by the hedge of flowering *henna* ; I will guide you. I will make a bed for you, and light a lamp. In the morning, when the birds are roused by the stir of milking the cows, I will waken you.

## 10

WHAT is it that drives these bees from their home ; these followers of unseen trails ? What cry is this in their eager wings ? How can they hear the music that sleeps in the flower soul ? How can they find their way

to the chamber where the honey lies  
shy and silent ?

## 11

It was only the budding of leaves in the summer, the summer that came into the garden by the sea. It was only a stir and rustle in the south wind, a few lazy snatches of songs, and then the day was done.

But let there be flowering of love in the summer to come in the garden by the sea. Let my joy take its birth and clap its hands and dance with the surging songs, and make the morning open its eyes wide in sweet amazement.

## 12

AGES ago when you opened the south gate of the garden of gods, and came down upon the first youth of the earth,

O Spring; men and women rushed out of their houses, laughing and dancing, and pelting each other with flower-dust in a sudden madness of mirth.

Year after year you bring the same flowers that you scattered in your path in that earliest April. Therefore, to-day, in their pervading perfume, they breathe the sigh of the days that are now dreams,—the clinging sadness of vanished worlds. Your breeze is laden with love-legends that have faded from all human language.

One day, with fresh wonder, you came into my life that was fluttered with its first love. Since then the tender timidity of that inexperienced joy comes hidden every year in the early green buds of your lemon flowers; your red roses carry in their burning silence all that was unutterable in me; the memory of lyric hours, those

days of May, rustles in the thrill of  
your new leaves born again and again.

## 13

LAST night in the garden I offered  
you my youth's foaming wine. You  
lifted the cup to your lips, you shut  
your eyes and smiled while I raised  
your veil, unbound your tresses, draw-  
ing down upon my breast your face  
sweet with its silence, last night when  
the moon's dream overflowed the  
world of slumber.

To-day in the dew-cooled calm of  
the dawn you are walking to God's  
temple, bathed and robed in white, with  
a basketful of flowers in your hand.  
I stand aside in the shade under the  
tree, with my head bent, in the calm  
of the dawn by the lonely road to the  
temple.

## 14

If I am impatient to-day, forgive me, my love. It is the first summer rain, and the riverside forest is aflutter, and the blossoming *kadam* trees are tempting the passing winds with wine-cups of perfume. See, from all corners of the sky lightnings are darting their glances, and winds are rampant in your hair.

If to-day I bring my homage to you, forgive me, my love. The everyday world is hidden in the dimness of the rain, all work has stopped in the village, the meadows are desolate. In your dark eyes the coming of the rain finds its music, and it is at your door that July waits with jasmines for your hair in its blue skirt.

## 15

HER neighbours call her dark in the village—but she is a lily to my heart, yes, a lily though not fair. Light came muffled with clouds when first I saw her in the field; her head was bare, her veil was off, her braided hair hanging loose on her neck. She may be dark as they say in the village, but I have seen her black eyes and am glad.

The pulse of the air boded storm. She rushed out of the hut when she heard her dappled cow low in dismay. For a moment she turned her large eyes to the clouds, and felt a stir of the coming rain in the sky. I stood at the corner of the rice-field,—if she noticed me, it was known only to her (and perhaps I know it). She is dark as the message of the shower in summer, dark as the shade of the flowering wood-



land ; she is dark as the longing for unknown love in the wistful night of May.

## 16

SHE dwelt here by the pool with its landing-stairs in ruins. Many an evening she had watched the moon made dizzy by the shaking of bamboo leaves, and on many a rainy day the smell of the wet earth had come to her over the young shoots of rice.

Her pet name is known here among those date-palm groves and in the court-yards where girls sit and talk while stitching their winter quilts. The water in this pool keeps in its depth the memory of her swimming limbs, and her wet feet had left their marks, day after day, on the footpath leading to the village.

The women who come to-day with their vessels to the water have all

seen her smile over simple jests, and the old peasant, taking his bullocks to their bath, used to stop at her door every day to greet her.

Many a sailing boat passes by this village ; many a traveller takes rest beneath that banyan tree ; the ferry boat crosses to yonder ford carrying crowds to the market ; but they never notice this spot by the village road, near the pool with its ruined landing-stairs,—where dwelt she whom I love.

## 17

WHILE ages passed and the bees haunted the summer gardens, the moon smiled to the lilies of the night, the lightnings flashed their fiery kisses to the clouds and fled laughing, the poet stood in a corner, one with the trees and clouds. He kept his heart silent, like a flower, watched through

his dreams as does the crescent moon ;  
and wandered like the summer breeze  
for no purpose.

One April evening, when the moon rose up like a bubble from the depth of the sunset ; and one maiden was busy watering the plants ; and one feeding her doe, and one making her peacock dance, the poet broke out singing—"Oh listen to the secrets of the world. I know that the lily is pale for the moon's love. The lotus draws her veil aside before the morning sun, and the reason is simple if you think. The meaning of the bee's hum in the ear of the early jasmine has escaped the learned, but the poet knows."

The sun went down in a blaze of blush, the moon loitered behind the trees, and the south wind whispered to the lotus that the poet was not as simple as he seemed. The maidens

and youths clapped their hands and cried—"The world's secret is out." They looked into each other's eyes and sang—"Let our secret as well be flung into the winds."

## 18

YOUR days will be full of cares, if you must give me your heart. My house by the cross-roads has its doors open and my mind is absent,—for I sing.

I shall never be made to answer for it, if you must give me your heart. If I pledge my word to you in tunes now, and am too much in earnest to keep it when music is silent, you must forgive me; for the law laid down in May is best broken in December.

Do not always keep remembering it, if you must give me your heart. When your eyes sing with love, and

your voice ripples with laughter, my answers to your questions will be wild, and not miserly accurate in facts,—they are to be believed for ever and then forgotten for good.

## 19

It is written in the book that Man, when fifty, must leave the noisy world, to go to the forest seclusion. But the poet proclaims that the forest hermitage is only for the young. For it is the birthplace of flowers and the haunt of birds and bees ; and hidden nooks are waiting there for the thrill of lovers' whispers. There the moonlight, that is all one kiss for the *mālātī* flowers, has its deep message, but those who understand it are far below fifty.

And alas, youth is inexperienced and wilful, therefore it is but meet

that the old should take charge of the household, and the young take to the seclusion of forest shades and the severe discipline of courting.

## 20

WHERE is the market for you, my song? Is it there where the learned muddle the summer breeze with their snuff; where men endlessly dispute whether the oil depends upon the cask, or the cask upon the oil; where yellow manuscripts frown upon the fleet-footed frivolousness of life? My song cries out, Ah, no, no, no.

Where is the market for you, my song? Is it there where the man of fortune grows enormous in pride and flesh in his marble palace, with his books on the shelves, dressed in leather, painted in gold, dusted by slaves, their virgin pages dedicated to the

god obscure? My song gasped and said, Ah, no, no, no.

Where is the market for you, my song? Is it there where the young student sits, with his head bent over his books, and his mind straying in youth's dream-land; where prose is prowling on the desk, and poetry hiding in the heart? There among that dusty disorder, would you care to play hide-and-seek? My song remains silent in shy hesitation.

Where is the market for you, my song? Is it there where the bride is busy in the house, where she runs to her bedroom the moment she is free, and snatches, from under her pillows, the book of romance so roughly handled by the baby, so full of the scent of her hair? My song heaves a sigh and trembles with uncertain desire.

Where is the market for you, my

song? Is it there where the least of a bird's notes is never missed, where the stream's babbling finds its full wisdom, where all the lute-strings of the world shower their music upon two fluttering hearts? My song bursts out and cries, Yes, yes.

## 21

(From the Bengali of DEVENDRANATH SEN)

METHINKS, my love, before the day-break of life you stood under some waterfall of happy dreams, filling your blood with its liquid turbulence. Or, perhaps, your path was through the garden of the gods, where the merry multitude of jasmine, lilies, and oleanders fell into your arms in heaps, and entering your heart became boisterous.

Your laughter is a song whose words are drowned in the clamour of



tunes, a rapture of the odour of flowers unseen; it is like the moonlight breaking through the window of your lips when the moon is hiding in your heart. I ask for no reason, I forget the cause, I only know that your laughter is the tumult of insurgent life.

## 22

I SHALL gladly suffer the pride of culture to die out in my house, if only in some happy future I am born a herd boy in the Brinda forest.

The herd boy who grazes his cattle sitting under the banyan tree, and idly weaves *gunja* flowers into garlands, who loves to splash and plunge in the Jamuna's cool deep stream.

He calls his companions to wake up when morning dawns, and all the houses in the lane hum with the sound of the churn, clouds of dust are raised

by the cattle, the maidens come out in the courtyard to milk the kine.

As the shadows deepen under the *tomal* trees, and the dusk gathers on the river-banks ; when the milkmaids, while crossing the turbulent water, tremble with fear ; and loud peacocks, with tails outspread, dance in the forest, he watches the summer clouds.

When the April night is sweet as a fresh-blown flower, he disappears in the forest with a peacock's plume in his hair ; the swing ropes are twined with flowers on the branches ; the south wind throbs with music, and the merry shepherd boys crowd on the banks of the blue river.

No, I will never be the leader, brothers, of this new age of new Bengal ; I shall not trouble to light the lamp of culture for the benighted. If only I could be born, under the shady Asoka groves, in some village

of Brinda, where milk is churned by the maidens.

## 23

I LOVED the sandy bank where, in the lonely pools, ducks clamoured and turtles basked in the sun ; where, with evening, stray fishing-boats took shelter in the shadow by the tall grass.

You loved the wooded bank where shadows were gathered in the arms of the bamboo thickets ; where women came with their vessels through the winding lane.

The same river flowed between us, singing the same song to both its banks. I listened to it, lying alone on the sand under the stars ; and you listened sitting by the edge of the slope in the early morning light. Only the words I heard from it you did not know, and the secret it spoke to you was a mystery for ever to me.

## 24

YOUR window half-opened and veil half-raised you stand there waiting for the bangle-seller to come with his tinsel. You idly watch the heavy cart creak on in the dusty road, and the boat-mast crawling along the horizon across the far-off river.

The world to you is like an old woman's chant at her spinning-wheel, unmeaning rhymes crowded with random images.

But who knows if he is on his way this lazy sultry noon, the Stranger, carrying his basket of strange wares? He will pass by your door with his clear cry, and you shall fling open your window, cast off your veil, come out of the dusk of your dreams and meet your destiny.

## 25

I CLASP your hands, and my heart plunges into the dark of your eyes, seeking you, who ever evade me behind words and silence.

Yet I know that I must be content in my love, with what is fitful and fugitive. For we have met for a moment in the crossing of the roads. Have I the power to carry you through this crowd of worlds, through this maze of paths? Have I the food that can sustain you across the dark passage gaping with arches of death?

## 26

IF by chance you think of me, I shall sing to you when the rainy evening loosens her shadows upon the river, slowly trailing her dim light towards the west,—when the day's remnant is too narrow for work or for play.

You will sit alone in the balcony of the south, and I shall sing from the darkened room. In the growing dusk the smell of the wet leaves will come through the window ; and the stormy winds will become clamorous in the cocoa-nut grove.

When the lighted lamp is brought into the room I shall go. And then, perhaps, you will listen to the night, and hear my song when I am silent.

## 27

I FILLED my tray with whatever I had, and gave it to you. What shall I bring to your feet to-morrow, I wonder? I am like the tree that, at the end of the flowering summer, gazes at the sky with its lifted branches bare of their blossoms.

But in all my past offerings is there

not a single flower made fadeless by  
the eternity of tears ?

Will you remember it and thank  
me with your eyes when I stand before  
you with empty hands at the leave-  
taking of my summer days ?

## 28

I DREAMT that she sat by my head,  
tenderly ruffling my hair with her  
fingers, playing the melody of her  
touch. I looked at her face and  
struggled with my tears, till the agony  
of unspoken words burst my sleep like  
a bubble.

I sat up and saw the glow of the  
Milky Way above my window, like  
a world of silence on fire, and I  
wondered if at this moment she had  
a dream that rhymed with mine.

## 29

I THOUGHT I had something to say to her when our eyes met across the hedge. But she passed away. And it rocks day and night, like a boat, on every wave of the hours, the word that I had to say to her. It seems to sail in the autumn clouds on an endless quest and to bloom into evening flowers, seeking its lost moment in the sunset. It twinkles like fireflies in my heart, to find its meaning in the dusk of despair, the word that I had to say to her.

## 30

THE spring flowers break out like the passionate pain of unspoken love. With their breath comes the memory of my old day songs. My heart of



a sudden has put on green leaves of desire. My love came not, but her touch is in my limbs, and her voice comes across the fragrant fields. Her gaze is in the sad depth of the sky, but where are her eyes? Her kisses flit in the air, but where are her lips?

## 31

## A POSY

(From the Bengali of SATYENDRANATH DATTA)

My flowers were like milk and honey and wine; I bound them into a posy with a golden ribbon, but they escaped my watchful care and fled away, and only the ribbon remains.

My songs were like milk and honey and wine, they were held in the rhythm of my beating heart, but they spread their wings and fled away,

the darlings of the idle hours, and my heart beats in silence.

The beauty I loved was like milk and honey and wine, her lips like the rose of the dawn, her eyes bee-black. I kept my heart silent lest it should startle her, but she eluded me like my flowers and like my songs, and my love remains alone.

## 32

MANY a time when the spring day knocked at our door I kept busy with my work and you did not answer. Now when I am left alone and heart-sick the spring day comes once again, but I know not how to turn him away from the door. When he came to crown us with joy the gate was shut, but now when he comes with his gift of sorrow his path must be open.

## 33

THE boisterous spring, who once came into my life with its lavish laughter, burdening her hours with improvident roses, setting skies aflame with the red kisses of new-born *ashoka* leaves, now comes stealing into my solitude through the lonely lanes along the brooding shadows heavy with silence, and sits still in my balcony gazing across the fields, where the green of the earth swoons exhausted in the utter paleness of the sky.

## 34

WHEN our farewell moment came, like a low-hanging rain-cloud, I had only time to tie a red ribbon on your wrist, while my hands trembled. To-day I sit alone on the grass in the season of *mahua* flowers, with one

quivering question in my mind, "Do you still keep the little red ribbon tied on your wrist?"

You went by the narrow road that skirted the blossoming field of flax. I saw that my garland of overnight was still hanging loose from your hair. But why did you not wait till I could gather, in the morning, new flowers for my final gift? I wonder if unawares it dropped on your way, —the garland hanging loose from your hair.

Many a song I had sung to you, morning and evening, and the last one you carried in your voice when you went away. You never tarried to hear the one song unsung I had for you alone and for ever. I wonder if, at last, you are tired of my song that you hummed to yourself while walking through the field.

## 35

LAST night clouds were threatening, and *amlak* branches struggled in the grips of the gusty wind. I hoped, if dreams came to me, they would come in the shape of my beloved, in the lonely night loud with rain.

The winds still moan through the fields, and the tear-stained cheeks of dawn are pale. My dreams have been in vain, for truth is hard, and dreams, too, have their own ways.

Last night when the darkness was drunken with storm, and the rain, like night's veil, was torn by the winds into shreds, would it make truth jealous if untruth came to me in the shape of my beloved, in the starless night loud with rain ?

## 36

My fetters, you made music in my heart. I played with you all day long and made you my ornament. We were the best of friends, my fetters. There were times when I was afraid of you, but my fear made me love you the more. You were companions of my long dark night, and I make my bow to you, before I bid you good-bye, my fetters.

## 37

You had your rudder broken many a time, my boat, and your sails torn to tatters. Often had you drifted towards the sea, dragging anchor, and heeded not. But now there has spread a crack in your hull and your hold is heavy. Now is the time for you to end your voyage, to be rocked

into sleep by the lapping of the water by the beach.

Alas, I know all warning is vain. The veiled face of dark doom lures you. The madness of the storm and the waves is upon you. The music of the tide is rising high. You are shaken by the fever of that dance.

Then break your chain, my boat, and be free, and fearlessly rush to your wreck.

## 38

THE current in which I drifted ran rapid and strong when I was young. The spring breeze was spendthrift of itself, the trees were on fire with flowers; and the birds never slept from singing.

I sailed with giddy speed, carried away by the flood of passion; I had

no time to see and feel and take the world into my being.

Now that youth has ebbed and I am stranded on the bank, I can hear the deep music of all things, and the sky opens to me its heart of stars.

## 39

THERE is a looker-on who sits behind my eyes. It seems he has seen things in ages and worlds beyond memory's shore, and those forgotten sights glisten on the grass and shiver on the leaves. He has seen under new veils the face of the one beloved, in twilight hours of many a nameless star. Therefore his sky seems to ache with the pain of countless meetings and partings, and a longing pervades this spring breeze,—the longing that is full of the whisper of ages without beginning.



## 40

A MESSAGE came from my youth of vanished days, saying, "I wait for you among the quiverings of unborn May, where smiles ripen for tears and hours ache with songs unsung."

It says, "Come to me across the worn-out track of age, through the gates of death. For dreams fade, hopes fail, the gathered fruits of the year decay, but I am the eternal truth, and you shall meet me again and again in your voyage of life from shore to shore."

## 41

THE girls are out to fetch water from the river—their laughter comes through the trees, I long to join them in the lane, where goats graze in the shade, and squirrels flit from sun to shadow, across the fallen leaves.

But my day's task is already done,  
my jars are filled. I stand at my  
door to watch the glistening green  
of the *areca* leaves, and hear the  
laughing women going to fetch water  
from the river.

It has ever been dear to me to carry  
the burden of my full vessel day after  
day, in the dew-dipped morning fresh-  
ness and in the tired glimmer of the  
dayfall.

Its gurgling water babbled to me  
when my mind was idle, it laughed  
with the silent laughter of my joyous  
thoughts—it spoke to my heart with  
tearful sobs when I was sad. I have  
carried it in stormy days, when the  
loud rain drowned the anxious cooing  
of doves.

My day's task is done, my jars are  
filled, the light wanes in the west,  
and shadows gather beneath the trees ;  
a sigh comes from the flowering linseed

field, and my wistful eyes follow the lane that runs through the village to the bank of the dark water.

## 42

ARE you a mere picture, and not as true as those stars, true as this dust? They throb with the pulse of things, but you are immensely aloof in your stillness, painted form.

The day was when you walked with me, your breath warm, your limbs singing of life. My world found its speech in your voice, and touched my heart with your face. You suddenly stopped in your walk, in the shadow-side of the Forever, and I went on alone.

Life, like a child, laughs, shaking its rattle of death as it runs; it beckons me on, I follow the unseen; but you stand there, where you stopped

behind that dust and those stars;  
and you are a mere picture.

No, it cannot be. Had the life-flood utterly stopped in you, it would stop the river in its flow, and the foot-fall of dawn in her cadence of colours. Had the glimmering dusk of your hair vanished in the hopeless dark, the woodland shade of summer would die with its dreams.

Can it be true that I forgot you? We haste on without heed, forgetting the flowers on the roadside hedge. Yet they breathe unaware into our forgetfulness, filling it with music. You have moved from my world, to take seat at the root of my life, and therefore is this forgetting—remembrance lost in its own depth.

You are no longer before my songs, but one with them. You came to me with the first ray of dawn. I lost you with the last gold of evening. Ever

since I am always finding you through the dark. No, you are no mere picture.

## 43

DYING, you have left behind you the great sadness of the Eternal in my life. You have painted my thought's horizon with the sunset colours of your departure, leaving a track of tears across the earth to love's heaven. Clapsed in your dear arms, life and death united in me in a marriage bond.

I think I can see you watching there in the balcony with your lamp lighted, where the end and the beginning of all things meet. My world went hence through the doors that you opened—you holding the cup of death to my lips, filling it with life from your own.

## 44

WHEN in your death you died to all that was outside me, vanishing from the thousand things of the world, to be fully reborn in my sorrow, I felt that my life had grown perfect, the man and the woman becoming one in me for ever.

## 45

BRING beauty and order into my forlorn life, woman, as you brought them into my house when you lived. Sweep away the dusty fragments of the hours, fill the empty jars and mend all neglects. Then open the inner door of the shrine, light the candle, and let us meet there in silence before our God.

## 46

THE sky gazes on its own endless blue and dreams. We clouds are its whims, we have no home. The stars shine on the crown of Eternity. Their records are permanent, while ours are pencilled, to be rubbed off the next moment. Our part is to appear on the stage of the air to sound our tambourines and fling flashes of laughter. But from our laughter comes the rain, which is real enough, and thunder which is no jest. Yet we have no claim upon Time for wages, and the breath that blew us into being blows us away before we are given a name.

## 47

THE road is my wedded companion. She speaks to me under my feet all day, she sings to my dreams all night.

My meeting with her had no beginning, it begins endlessly at each daybreak, renewing its summer in fresh flowers and songs, and her every new kiss is the first kiss to me.

The road and I are lovers. I change my dress for her night after night, leaving the tattered cumber of the old in the wayside inns when the day dawns.

## 48

I TRAVELLED the old road every day, I took my fruits to the market, my cattle to the meadows, I ferried my boat across the stream and all the ways were well known to me.

One morning my basket was heavy with wares. Men were busy in the fields, the pastures crowded with cattle; the breast of earth heaved with the mirth of ripening rice.



Suddenly there was a tremor in the air, and the sky seemed to kiss me on my forehead. My mind started up like the morning out of mist.

I forgot to follow the track. I stepped a few paces from the path, and my familiar world appeared strange to me, like a flower I had only known in bud.

My everyday wisdom was ashamed. I went astray in the fairyland of things. It was the best luck of my life that I lost my path that morning, and found my eternal childhood.

## 49

WHERE is heaven? you ask me, my child,—the sages tell us it is beyond the limits of birth and death, unswayed by the rhythm of day and night; it is not of this earth.

But your poet knows that its

eternal hunger is for time and space,  
and it strives evermore to be born in  
the fruitful dust. Heaven is fulfilled  
in your sweet body, my child, in your  
palpitating heart.

The sea is beating its drums in joy,  
the flowers are a-tiptoe to kiss you.  
For heaven is born in you, in the arms  
of the mother-dust.

50

THE CHILD

(Translated from the Bengali of  
DWYENDRALAL ROY)

"COME, moon, come down, kiss my  
darling on the forehead," cries the  
mother as she holds the baby girl in  
her lap while the moon smiles as it  
dreams. There come stealing in the  
dark the vague fragrance of the  
summer and the night-bird's songs  
from the shadow-laden solitude of

the mango-grove. At a far-away village rises from a peasant's flute a fountain of plaintive notes, and the young mother, sitting on the terrace, baby in her lap, croons sweetly, "Come, moon, come down, kiss my darling on the forehead." Once she looks up at the light of the sky, and then at the light of the earth in her arms, and I wonder at the placid silence of the moon.

The baby laughs and repeats her mother's call, "Come, moon, come down." The mother smiles, and smiles the moonlit night, and I, the poet, the husband of the baby's mother, watch this picture from behind, unseen.

THE early autumn day is cloudless.  
The river is full to the brim, washing

the naked roots of the tottering tree by the ford. The long narrow path, like the thirsty tongue of the village, dips down into the stream.

My heart is full, as I look around me and see the silent sky and the flowing water, and feel that happiness is spread abroad, as simply as a smile on a child's face.

## 52

Tired of waiting, you burst your bonds, impatient flowers, before the winter had gone. Glimpses of the unseen comer reached your wayside watch, and you rushed out running and panting, impulsive jasmines, troops of riotous roses.

You were the first to march to the breach of death, your clamour of colour and perfume troubled the air. You laughed and pressed and pushed

each other, bared your breast and dropped in heaps.

The Summer will come in its time, sailing in the flood-tide of the south wind. But you never counted slow moments to be sure of him. You recklessly spent your all in the road, in the terrible joy of faith.

You heard his footsteps from afar, and flung your mantle of death for him to tread upon. Your bonds break even before the rescuer is seen, you make him your own ere he can come and claim you.

## CHAMPA

(From the Bengali of SATYENDRANATH DATTA)

I OPENED my bud when April breathed her last and the summer scorched with kisses the unwilling earth. I

came half afraid and half curious, like a mischievous imp peeping at a hermit's cell.

I heard the frightened whispers of the despoiled woodland, and the *Kokil* gave voice to the languor of the summer; through the fluttering leaf-curtain of my birth-chamber I saw the world grim, grey, and haggard.

Yet boldly I came out strong with the faith of youth, quaffed the fiery wine from the glowing bowl of the sky, and proudly saluted the morning, I, the champa flower, who carry the perfume of the sun in my heart.

## 54

IN the beginning of time, there rose from the churning of God's dream two women. One is the dancer at the court of paradise, the desired of men, she who laughs and plucks the minds

of the wise from their cold meditations  
and of fools from their emptiness ;  
and scatters them like seeds with  
careless hands in the extravagant  
winds of March, in the flowering frenzy  
of May.

The other is the crowned queen of  
heaven, the mother, throned on the  
fullness of golden autumn ; she who  
in the harvest-time brings straying  
hearts to the smile sweet as tears,  
the beauty deep as the sea of silence,  
—brings them to the temple of the  
Unknown, at the holy confluence of  
Life and Death.

## 55

THE noonday air is quivering, like the  
gauzy wings of a dragon-fly. Roofs of  
the village huts brood birdlike over  
the drowsy households, while a *Kokil*  
sings unseen from its leafy loneliness.

The fresh liquid notes drop upon the tuneless toil of the human crowd, adding music to lovers' whispers, to mothers' kisses, to children's laughter. They flow over our thoughts, like a stream over pebbles, rounding them in beauty every unconscious moment.

## 56

THE evening was lonely for me, and I was reading a book till my heart became dry, and it seemed to me that beauty was a thing fashioned by the traders in words. Tired I shut the book and snuffed the candle. In a moment the room was flooded with moonlight.

Spirit of Beauty, how could you, whose radiance overbrims the sky, stand hidden behind a candle's tiny flame? How could a few vain words from a book rise like a mist, and veil



her whose voice has hushed the heart  
of earth into ineffable calm ?

## 57

THIS autumn is mine, for she was  
rocked in my heart. The glistening  
bells of her anklets rang in my blood,  
and her misty veil fluttered in my  
breath. I know the touch of her  
blown hair in all my dreams. She  
is abroad in the trembling leaves that  
danced in my life-throbs, and her  
eyes that smile from the blue sky  
drank their light from me.

## 58

THINGS throng and laugh loud in the  
sky ; the sands and dust dance and  
whirl like children. Man's mind is  
aroused by their shouts ; his thoughts  
long to be the playmates of things.

Our dreams, drifting in the stream of the vague, stretch their arms to clutch the earth,—their efforts stiffen into bricks and stones, and thus the city of man is built.

Voices come swarming from the past,—seeking answers from the living moments. Beats of their wings fill the air with tremulous shadows, and sleepless thoughts in our minds leave their nests to take flight across the desert of dimness, in the passionate thirst for forms. They are lampless pilgrims, seeking the shore of light, to find themselves in things. They will be lured into poet's rhymes, they will be housed in the towers of the town not yet planned, they have their call to arms from the battlefields of the future, they are bidden to join hands in the strifes of peace yet to come.

THEY do not build high towers in the Land of All-I-Have-Found. A grassy lawn runs by the road, with a stream of fugitive water at its side. The bees haunt the cottage porches abloom with passion flowers. The men set out on their errands with a smile, and in the evening they come home with a song, with no wages, in the Land of All-I-Have-Found.

In the midday, sitting in the cool of their courtyards, the women hum and spin at their wheels, while over the waving harvest comes wafted the music of shepherds' flutes. It rejoices the wayfarers' hearts who walk singing through the shimmering shadows of the fragrant forest in the Land of All-I-Have-Found.

The traders sail with their merchandise down the river, but they do

not moor their boats in this land;  
soldiers march with banners flying,  
but the king never stops his chariot.  
Travellers who come from afar to rest  
here awhile, go away without knowing  
what there is in the Land of All-I-  
Have-Found.

Here crowds do not jostle each other  
in the roads. O poet, set up your  
house in this land. Wash from your  
feet the dust of distant wanderings,  
tune your lute, and at the day's end  
stretch yourself on the cool grass  
under the evening star in the Land of  
All-I-Have-Found.

## 60

**TAKE** back your coins, King's Coun-  
cillor. I am of those women you sent  
to the forest shrine to decoy the young  
ascetic who had never seen a woman.  
I failed in your bidding.

Dimly day was breaking when the hermit boy came to bathe in the stream, his tawny locks crowded on his shoulders, like a cluster of morning clouds, and his limbs shining like a streak of sunbeam. We laughed and sang as we rowed in our boat; we jumped into the river in a mad frolic, and danced around him, when the sun rose staring at us from the water's edge in a flush of divine anger.

Like a child-god, the boy opened his eyes and watched our movements, the wonder deepening till his eyes shone like morning stars. He lifted his clasped hands and chanted a hymn of praise in his bird-like young voice, thrilling every leaf of the forest. Never such words were sung to a mortal woman before; they were like the silent hymn to the dawn which rises from the hushed hills. The women hid their mouths with

their hands, their bodies swaying with laughter, and a spasm of doubt ran across his face. Quickly came I to his side, sorely pained, and, bowing to his feet, I said, "Lord, accept my service."

I led him to the grassy bank, wiped his body with the end of my silken mantle, and, kneeling on the ground, I dried his feet with my trailing hair. When I raised my face and looked into his eyes, I thought I felt the world's first kiss to the first woman,—Blessed am I, blessed is God, who made me a woman. I heard him say to me, "What God unknown are you? Your touch is the touch of the Immortal, your eyes have the mystery of the midnight."

Ah, no, not that smile, King's Councillor,—the dust of worldly wisdom has covered your sight, old man. But this boy's innocence pierced the

mist and saw the shining truth, the woman divine.

Ah, how the goddess wakened in me, at the awful light of that first adoration. Tears filled my eyes, the morning ray caressed my hair like a sister, and the woodland breeze kissed my forehead as it kisses the flowers.

The women clapped their hands, and laughed their obscene laugh, and with veils dragging on the dust and hair hanging loose they began to pelt him with flowers.

Alas, my spotless sun, could not my shame weave fiery mist to cover you in its folds? I fell at his feet and cried, "Forgive me." I fled like a stricken deer through shade and sun, and cried as I fled, "Forgive me." The women's foul laughter pressed me like a crackling fire, but the words ever rang in my ears, "What God unknown are you?"

**CROSSING**





## 1

**THE** Sun breaks out from the clouds  
on the day when I must go.

And the sky gazes upon the earth like  
God's wonder.

My heart is sad, for it knows not from  
where comes its call.

Does the breeze bring the whisper of  
the world which I leave behind  
with its music of tears melting  
in the sunny silence? or the  
breath of the island in the far-  
away sea basking in the Summer  
of the unknown flowers?

## 2

When the market is over and they  
return homewards through the  
dusk,

I sit at the wayside to watch thee  
plying thy boat,  
Crossing the dark water with the sun-  
set gleam upon thy sail ;  
I see thy silent figure standing at the  
helm and suddenly catch thy eyes  
gazing upon me :  
I leave my song ; and cry to thee to  
take me across.

THE wind is up, I set my sail of songs,  
Steersman, sit at the helm.  
For my boat is fretting to be free, to  
dance in the rhythm of the wind  
and water.  
The day is spent, it is evening.  
My friends of the shore have taken  
leave.  
Loose the chain and heave the anchor,  
we sail by the starlight.

The wind is stirred into the murmur  
of music at this time of my departure.

Steersman, sit at the helm.

**4**

ACCEPT me, my lord, accept me for  
this while.

Let those orphaned days that passed  
without thee be forgotten.

Only spread this little moment wide  
across thy lap, holding it under  
thy light.

I have wandered in pursuit of voices  
that drew me yet led me nowhere.

Now let me sit in peace and listen  
to thy words in the soul of my  
silence.

Do not turn away thy face from my  
heart's dark secrets, but burn  
them till they are alight with thy  
fire.

## 5

THE scouts of a distant storm have  
pitched their cloud-tents in the  
sky; the light has paled; the  
air is damp with tears in the  
voiceless shadows of the forest.

The peace of sadness is in my heart  
like the brooding silence upon the  
master's lute before the music  
begins.

My world is still with the expectation  
of the great pain of thy coming  
into my life.

## 6

THOU hast done well, my lover, thou  
hast done well to send me thy fire  
of pain.

For my incense never yields its per-  
fume till it burns, and my lamp  
is blind till it is lighted.

When my mind is numb its torpor

must be stricken by thy love's  
lightning; and the very darkness  
that blots my world burns like  
a torch when set afire by thy  
thunder.

## 7

DELIVER me from my own shadows,  
my lord, from the wrecks and  
confusion of my days.  
For the night is dark and thy pilgrim  
is blinded,  
Hold thou my hand.  
Deliver me from despair.  
Touch with thy flame the lightless  
lamp of my sorrow.  
Waken my tired strength from its  
sleep.  
Do not let me linger behind counting  
my losses.  
Let the road sing to me of the house at  
every step.

For the night is dark, and thy pilgrim  
is blinded.

Hold thou my hand.

## 8

THE lantern which I carry in my hand  
makes enemy of the darkness of  
the farther road.

And this wayside becomes a terror to  
me, where even the flowering tree  
frowns like a spectre of scowling  
menace ; and the sound of my  
own steps comes back to me in the  
echo of muffled suspicion.

Therefore I pray for thy own morning  
light, when the far and the near  
will kiss each other and death  
and life will be one in love.

## 9

WHEN thou savest me the steps are  
lighter in the march of thy worlds.

**When stains are washed away from  
my heart it brightens the light  
of thy sun.**

**That the bud has not blossomed in  
beauty in my life spreads sadness  
in the heart of creation.**

**When the shroud of darkness will be  
lifted from my soul it will bring  
music to thy smile.**

**10**

**THOU hast given me thy love, filling  
the world with thy gifts.**

**They are showered upon me when I  
do not know them, for my heart  
is asleep and dark is the night.**

**Yet though lost in the cavern of my  
dreams I have been thrilled with  
fitful gladness ;**

**And I know that in return for the  
treasure of thy great worlds thou**



wilt receive from me one little  
flower of love in the morning  
when my heart awakes.

## 11

My eyes have lost their sleep in watch-  
ing ; yet if I do not meet thee  
still it is sweet to watch.

My heart sits in the shadow of the  
rains waiting for thy love ; if she  
is deprived still it is sweet to  
hope.

They walk away in their different  
paths leaving me behind ; if I am  
alone still it is sweet to listen for  
thy footsteps.

The wistful face of the earth weaving  
its autumn mists wakens longing  
in my heart ; if it is in vain still  
it is sweet to feel the pain of  
longing.

**12**

**HOLD** thy faith firm, my heart, the day  
will dawn.

The seed of promise is deep in the soil,  
it will sprout.

Sleep, like a bud, will open its heart  
to the light, and the silence will  
find its voice.

The day is near when thy burden will  
become thy gift, and thy suffer-  
ings will light up thy path.

**13**

**THE** wedding hour is in the twilight,  
when the birds have sung their  
last and the winds are at rest  
on the waters, when the sunset  
spreads the carpet in the bridal  
chamber and the lamp is made  
ready to burn through the night.

Behind the silent dark walks the

Unseen Comer and my heart  
trembles.

All songs are hushed, for the service  
will be read under the evening  
star.

## 14

In the night when noise is tired the  
murmur of the sea fills the air.

The vagrant desires of the day come  
back to their rest round the  
lighted lamp.

Love's play is stilled into worship,  
life's stream touches the deep,  
and the world of forms comes to  
its nest in the beauty beyond all  
forms.

## 15

Who is awake all alone in this sleeping  
earth, in the air drowsing among  
the moveless leaves ? awake in

the silent birds' nests, in the  
secret centres of the flower buds ?  
awake in the throbbing stars of  
the night, in the depth of the pain  
of my being ?

**16**

You came to my door in the dawn  
and sang; it angered me to be  
awakened from sleep, and you  
went away unheeded.

You came in the noon and asked for  
water; it vexed me in my work,  
and you were sent away with  
reproaches.

You came in the evening with your  
flaming torches.

You seemed to me like a terror and  
I shut my door.

Now in the midnight I sit alone in my  
lampless room and call you back  
whom I turned away in insult.

## 17

**PICK** up this life of mine from the dust  
Keep it under your eyes, in the palm  
of your right hand.

Hold it up in the light, hide it under  
the shadow of death ; keep it in  
the casket of the night with your  
stars, and then in the morning  
let it find itself among flowers  
that blossom in worship.

## 18

**I** KNOW that this life, missing its ripe-  
ness in love, is not altogether lost.

**I** know that the flowers that fade in  
the dawn, the streams that strayed  
in the desert, are not altogether  
lost.

**I** know that whatever lags behind in  
this life laden with slowness **is**  
not altogether lost.

I know that my dreams that are still  
unfulfilled, and my melodies still  
unstruck, are clinging to some  
lute-strings of thine, and they are  
not altogether lost.

## 19

You came to me in the wayward hours  
of spring with flute songs and  
flowers.

You troubled my heart from ripples  
into waves, rocking the red lotus  
of love.

You asked me to come out with you  
into the secret of life.

But I fell asleep among the mur-  
murous leaves of May.

When I woke the cloud gathered in  
the sky and the dead leaves flitted  
in the wind.

Through the patter of rain I hear your  
nearing footsteps and the cry to

come out with you into the secret  
of death.

I walk to your side and put my hand  
into yours, while your eyes burn  
and water drips from your hair.

## 20

THE day is dim with rain.

Angry lightnings glance through the  
tattered cloud-veils

And the forest is like a caged lion  
shaking its mane in despair.

On such a day\* amidst the winds beat-  
ing their wings, let me find my  
peace in thy presence,

For the sorrowing sky has shadowed  
my solitude, to deepen the mean-  
ing of thy touch about my heart.

## 21

ON that night when the storm broke  
open my door

I did not know that you entered my  
room through the ruins,  
For the lamp was blown out, and it  
became dark ;  
I stretched my arms to the sky in  
search of help.  
I lay on the dust waiting in the  
tumultuous dark and I knew not  
that storm was your own banner.  
When the morning came I saw you  
standing upon the emptiness that  
was spread over my house.

**22**

Is it the Destroyer who comes ?  
For the boisterous sea of tears heaves  
in the flood-tide of pain.  
The crimson clouds run wild in the  
wind lashed by lightning, and  
the thundering laughter of the  
Mad is over the sky.  
Life sits in the chariot crowned by  
Death.



Bring out your tribute to him of all  
that you have.

Do not hug your savings to your heart,  
do not look behind,

Bend your head at his feet, trailing  
your hair in the dust.

Take to the road from this moment.  
For the lamp is blown out and the  
house is desolate.

The storm winds scream through your  
doors, the walls are rocking, and  
the call comes from the land of  
dimness beyond your ken.

Hide not your face in terror; tears  
are in vain; your door-chains  
have snapped.

Run out for your voyage to the end  
of all joys and sorrows.

Let your steps be the steps of a  
desperate dance.

Sing "Victory to Life in Death."

Accept your destiny, O Bride!

Put on your red robe to follow through

the darkness the torchlight of the  
Bridegroom !

## 23

I CAME nearest to you, though I did  
not know it,—when I came to  
hurt you.

I owned you at last as my master  
when I fought against you to be  
defeated.

I merely made my debt to you burden-  
some when I robbed you in secret.

I struggled in my pride against your  
current only to feel all your force  
in my breast.

Rebelliously I put out the light in my  
house and your sky surprised me  
with its stars.

## 24

HAVE you come to me as my sorrow ?

. All the more I must cling to you.

Your face is veiled in the dark, all the  
more I must see you.

At the blow of death from your hand  
let my life leap up in a flame.

Tears flow from my eyes,—let them  
flow round your feet in worship.

And let the pain in my breast speak  
to me that you are still mine.

## 25

I **HID** myself to evade you.

Now that I am caught at last, strike  
me, see if I flinch.

Finish the game for good.

If you win in the end, strip me of all  
that I have.

I have had my laughter and songs in  
wayside booths and stately halls,  
—now that you have come into  
my life, make me weep, see if you  
can break my heart.

## 26

WHEN I awake in thy love my night  
of ease will be ended.

Thy sunrise will touch my heart with  
its touchstone of fire, and my  
voyage will begin in its orbit of  
triumphant suffering.

I shall dare to take up death's chal-  
lenge and carry thy voice in the  
heart of mockery and menace.

I shall bare my breast against the  
wrongs hurled at thy children,  
and take the risk of standing by  
thy side where none but thee  
remains.

## 27

I AM the weary earth of summer bare  
of life and parched.

I wait for thy shower to come down  
in the night when I open my  
breast and receive it in silence.

I long to give thee in return my songs  
and flowers.

But empty is my store, and only the  
deep sigh rises from my heart  
through the withered grass.

But I know that thou wilt wait for the  
morning when my hours will brim  
with their riches.

## 28

COME to me like summer cloud, spread-  
ing thy showers from sky to sky.

Deepen the purple of the hills with  
thy majestic shadows, quicken  
the languid forests into flowers,  
and awaken in the hill-streams  
the fervour of the far-away quest.

Come to me like summer cloud, stir-  
ring my heart with the promise  
of hidden life, and the gladness  
of the green.

## 29

**I HAVE** met thee where the night  
touches the edge of the day;  
where the light startles the dark-  
ness into dawn, and the waves  
carry the kiss of the one shore to  
the other.

**From** the heart of the fathomless blue  
comes one golden call, and across  
the dusk of tears I try to gaze at  
thy face and know not for certain  
if thou art seen.

## 30

**If** love be denied me then why does  
the morning break its heart in  
songs, and why are these whispers  
that the south wind scatters among  
the new-born leaves ?

**If** love be denied me then why does  
the midnight bear in yearning  
silence the pain of the stars ?

And why does this foolish heart reck-  
lessly launch its hope on the sea  
whose end it does not know ?

## 31

ONLY a portion of my gift is in this  
world, the rest of it is in my  
dreams.

You, who ever elude my touch, come  
there in secret silence, hiding  
your lamp.

I shall know you by the thrill 'in the  
darkness, by the whisper of the  
unseen worlds, by the breath of  
the unknown shore ;—

I shall know you by the sudden de-  
light of my heart melting into  
sadness of tears.

## 32

I KNOW you will win my heart some  
day, my lover.

Through your stars you gaze deep into  
my dreams ;

You send your secrets in your moon-  
beams to me, and I muse and my  
eyes dim with tears.

Your wooing is in the sunny sky  
thrilling in the tremulous leaves,  
in the idle hours overflowing with  
shepherds' piping, in the rain-  
dimmed dusk when the heart  
aches with its loneliness.

## 33

SOME one has secretly left in my hand  
a flower of love.

Some one has stolen my heart and  
scattered it abroad in the sky.

I know not if I have found him or I am  
seeking him everywhere, if it is  
a pang of bliss or of pain.



## 34

THE rains sweep the sky from end to end.

In the wild wet wind the jasmines  
revel in their own perfume.

There is a secret joy in the bosom of  
the night, it is the joy of the  
veiled sky in its hidden stars, the  
joy of the midnight forest in its  
hoarded bird-songs.

Let me fill my heart with it and carry  
it in secret through the day.

## 35

WHEN I travelled in the day I felt  
secure, and I did not heed the  
wonder of thy road, for I was  
proud of my speed; thy own  
light stood between me and thy  
presence.

Now it is night, and I feel thy road  
at every step in the dark and the

scent of flowers filling the silence  
—like mother's whisper to the  
child when the light is out.

I hold tight thy hand and thy touch  
is with me in my loneliness.

## 36

SAILING through the night I came to  
life's feast, and the morning's  
golden goblet was filled with light  
for me.

I sang in joy,

I knew not who was the giver,

And I forgot to ask his name.

In the mid-day the dust grew hot under  
my feet and the sun overhead.

Overcome by thirst I reached the well.

Water was poured to me.

I drank it.

And while I loved the ruby cup that  
was sweet as a kiss,

I did not see him who held it and forgot  
to ask his name.

In the weary evening I seek my way  
home.

My guide comes with a lamp and  
beckons me.

I ask his name,

But I only see his light through the  
silence and feel his smile filling  
the darkness.

## 37

Do not leave me and go, for it is night.  
The road through the wilderness is  
lonely and dark and lost in  
tangles :

The tired earth lies still, like one blind  
and without a staff.

I seem to have waited for this moment  
for ages to light my lamp and cull  
my flowers.

I have reached the brink of the shore-  
less sea to take my plunge and  
lose myself for ever.

## 38

I DID NOT know that I had thy touch  
before it was dawn.

The news has slowly reached me  
through my sleep, and I open my  
eyes with its surprise of tears.

The sky seems full of whispers for me  
and my limbs are bathed with  
songs.

My heart bends in worship like a dew-  
laden flower, and I feel the flood  
of my life rushing to the endless.

## 39

No guest had come to my house for  
long, my doors were locked, my  
windows barred; I thought my  
night would be lonely.

When I opened my eyes I found the  
darkness had vanished.

I rose up and ran and saw the bolts of  
my gates all broken, and through

the open door your wind and  
light waved their banner.

When I was a prisoner in my own  
house, and the doors were shut,  
my heart ever planned to escape  
and to wander.

Now at my broken gate, I sit still and  
wait for your coming,  
You keep me bound by my freedom.

## 40

Put out the lamps, my heart, the  
lamps of your lonely night.

The call comes to you to open your  
doors, for the morning light is  
abroad.

Leave your lute in the corner, my  
heart, the lute of your lonely  
life.

The call comes to you to come out  
in silence, for the morning sings  
your own songs.

## 41

THY gift of the earliest flower came  
to me this morning, and came  
the faint tuning of thy light.

I am a bee that has wallowed in the  
heart of thy golden dawn,

My wings are radiant with its pollen.

I have found my place in the feast of  
songs in thy April, and I am freed  
of my fetters like the morning of  
its mist in a mere play.

## 42

FREE me as free are the birds of the  
wilds, the wanderers of unseen  
paths.

Free me as free are the deluge of rain,  
and as the storm that shakes its  
locks and rushes on to its un-  
known end.

Free me as free is the forest fire, as is

the 'thunder that laughs aloud  
and hurls defiance to darkness.

## 43

WHEN you called me I was asleep  
under the shadows of my walls  
and I did not hear you.

Then you struck me with your own  
hands and wakened me in tears.

I started up to see that the sun had  
risen, that the flood-tide had  
brought the call of the deep, and  
my boat was ready rocking on the  
dancing water.

## 44

REJOICE !

For Night's fetters have broken, the  
dreams have vanished.

Thy word has rent its veils, the buds  
of morning are opened ; awake, O  
sleeper !

Light's greetings spread from the East  
to the West,  
And at the ramparts of the ruined  
prison rise the pæans of Victory!

## 45

IN this moment I see you seated upon  
the morning's golden carpet.  
The sun shines in your crown, the  
stars drop at your feet, the crowds  
come and bow to you and go,  
and the poet sits speechless in the  
corner.

## 46

My guest has come to my door in this  
autumn morning.  
Sing, my heart, sing thy welcome!  
Make thy song the song of the sunlit  
blue, of the dew-damp air, of the  
lavish gold of harvest fields, of  
the laughter of the loud water.



Or stand mute before him for awhile  
gazing at his face ;  
Then leave thy house and go out with  
him in silence.

## 47

I LIVED on the shady side of the road  
and watched my neighbours'  
gardens across the way revelling  
in the sunshine.

I felt I was poor, and from door to  
door went with my hunger.

The more they gave me from their  
careless abundance the more I  
became aware of my beggar's  
bowl.

Till one morning I awoke from my  
sleep at the sudden opening of  
my door, and you came and asked  
for alms.

In despair I broke the lid of my chest  
open and was startled into finding  
my own wealth.

## 48

**THOU** hast taken him to thine arms  
and crowned him with death, him  
who ever waited outside like a  
beggar at life's feast.

**Thou** hast put thy right hand on his  
failures and kissed him with peace  
that stills life's turbulent thirst.

**Thou** hast made him one with all  
kings and with the ancient world  
of wisdom.

## 49

**IN** 'the world's dusty road I lost my  
heart, but you picked it up in your  
hand.

**I** gleaned sorrow while seeking for joy,  
but the sorrow which you sent to  
me has turned to joy in my life.

**My** desires were scattered in pieces,  
you gathered them and strung  
them in your love.

And while I wandered from door to  
door, every step led me to your  
gate.

## 50

I WAS with the crowd when I was in  
the road ;  
Where the road ends I find myself  
alone with you.  
I knew not when my day dimmed into  
dusk and my companions left me.  
I knew not when your doors opened  
and I stood surprised at my own  
heart's music.  
But are there still traces of tears in  
my eyes though the bed is made,  
the lamp is lit, and we are alone,  
you and I ?

## 51

WHEN they came and clamoured and  
surrounded me they hid thee  
from my sight.

I thought I would bring to thee my  
gifts last of all.

Now that the day has waned, and they  
have taken their dues and left me  
alone,

I see thee standing at the door.

But I find I have no gift remaining  
to give, and I hold both my hands  
up to thee.

## 52

MUCH have you given to me,

Yet I ask for more.—

I come to you not merely for the  
draught of water, but for the  
spring;

Not for guidance to the door alone,  
but to the Master's hall; not only  
for the gift of love, but for the  
lover himself.

## 53

I HAVE come to thee to take thy touch  
before I begin my day.

Let thy eyes rest upon my eyes for  
awhile.

Let me take to my work the assurance  
of thy comradeship, my friend.

Fill my mind with thy music to last  
through the desert of noise !

Let thy Love's sunshine kiss the peaks  
of my thoughts and linger in  
my life's valley where the harvest  
ripens.

## 54

STAND before my eyes, and let thy  
glance touch my songs into a  
flame.

Stand among thy stars and let me find  
kindled in their lights my own  
fire of worship.

The earth is waiting at the world's  
wayside ;

Stand upon the green mantle she has  
flung upon thy path ; and let me  
feel in her grass and meadow

flowers the spread of my own  
salutation.

**Stand** in my lonely evening where my  
heart watches alone ; fill her cup  
of solitude, and let me feel in me  
the infinity of thy love.

**55**

**Let** thy love play upon my voice and  
rest on my silence.

**Let** it pass through my heart into all  
my movements.

**Let** thy love like stars shine in the  
darkness of my sleep and dawn  
in my awakening.

**Let** it burn in the flame of my desires  
And flow in all currents of my own  
love.

**Let** me carry thy love in my life as a  
harp does its music, and give it  
back to thee at last with my  
life.

## 56

You hide yourself in your own glory,  
my King.

The sand-grain and the dew-drop are  
more proudly apparent than your-  
self.

The world unabashed calls all things  
its own that are yours—yet it is  
never brought to shame.

You make room for us while standing  
aside in silence; therefore love  
lights her own lamp to seek you  
and comes to your worship un-  
bidden.

## 57

WHEN from the house of feast I came  
back home, the spell of the mid-  
night quieted the dance in my  
blood.

My heart became silent at once like  
a deserted theatre with its lamps  
out.

My mind crossed the dark and stood  
among the stars, and I saw that  
we were playing unafraid in the  
silent courtyard of our King's  
palace.

## 58

I WAS musing last night on my spend-  
thrift days, when I thought you  
spoke to me—

“In youth's careless career you  
kept all the doors open in your  
house.

The world went in and out as it  
pleased—the world with its dust,  
doubts, and disorder—and with  
its music.

With the wild crowd I came to you  
again and again unknown and  
unbidden.

Had you kept shut your doors in wise  
seclusion how could I have found  
my way into your house ? ”



## 59

NONE needs be thrust aside to make  
room for you.

When love prepares your seat she  
prepares it for all.

Where the earthly King appears,  
guards keep out the crowd, but  
when you come, my King, the  
whole world comes in your wake.

## 60

WITH his morning songs he knocks at  
our door bringing his greetings of  
sunrise.

With him we take our cattle to the  
fields and play our flute in the  
shade.

We lose him to find him again and  
again in the market crowd.

In the busy hour of the day we come  
upon him of a sudden, sitting on  
the wayside grass.

**We march when he beats his drum,  
We dance when he sings.  
We stake our joys and sorrows to play  
his game to the end.  
He stands at the helm of our boat,  
With him we rock on the perilous  
waves.  
For him we light our lamp and wait  
when our day is done.**

**61**

**RUN to his side as his comrades where  
he works with all workers.  
Sit around him as his partners where  
he plays his games.  
Follow him where he marches, keeping  
step to the rhythm of his drum-  
beats.  
Rush into the thick of the fair—the  
fair of life and death—  
For there he is with the crowd in the  
heart of its tumult.**

'Do not falter in your journey across  
the lonely hills over the thorns.  
For his call sounds at every step and  
we know that it is love's voice.

## 62

WHEN bells sounded in your temple  
in the morning, men and women  
hastened down the woodland path  
with their offerings of fresh  
flowers.

But I lay on the grass in the shade  
and let them pass by.

I think it was well that I was idle, for  
then my flowers were in bud.

At the end of the day they have  
bloomed, and I go to my evening  
worship.

## 63

MY King's road that lies still before  
my house makes my heart wistful.  
It stretches its beckoning hand to-

wards me ; its silence calls me  
out of my home ; with dumb  
entreaties it kisses my feet at  
every step.

It leads me on I know not to what  
abandonment, to what sudden  
gain or surprises of distress.

I know not where its windings end—  
But my King's road that lies still  
before my house makes my heart  
wistful.

## 64

WHILE I walk to my King's house at  
the end of the day the travellers  
come to ask me—

“ What hast thou for King's tribute ? ”

I do not know what to show them or  
how to answer, for I have merely  
this song.

My preparation is large in my house,  
where the claim is much and  
many are the claimants.

But when I come to my King's house  
I have only this single song to  
offer it for his wreath.

## 65

My songs are the same as are the spring  
flowers, they come from you.  
Yet I bring these to you as my own.  
You smile and accept them, and you  
are glad at my joy of pride.  
If my song flowers are frail and they  
fade and drop in the dust, I shall  
never grieve.  
For absence is not loss in your hand,  
and the fugitive moments that  
blossom in beauty are kept ever  
fresh in your wreath.

## 66

My King, thou hast called me to play  
my flute at the roadside, that  
they who bear the burden of  
voiceless life may stop in their

errands for a moment and sit  
and wonder before the balcony  
of thy palace gate; that they  
may see anew the ever old and  
find afresh what is ever about  
them, and say, "The flowers are  
in bloom, and the birds sing."

## 67

**WHEN** my first early songs woke in  
my heart I thought they were the  
playmates of the morning flowers.  
When they shook their wings and flew  
into the wilderness it seemed to  
me that they had the spirit of  
the summer which comes down  
with a sudden thunder roar to  
spend its all in laughter.  
I thought that they had the mad call  
of the storm to rush and lose their  
way beyond the sunset land.  
**But** now when in the evening light  
I see the blue line of the shore,

I know my songs are the boat that has  
brought me to the harbour across  
the wild sea.

## 68

THERE are numerous strings in your  
lute, let me add my own among  
them.

Then when you smite your chords my  
heart will break its silence and  
my life will be one with your song.  
Amidst your numberless stars let me  
place my own little lamp.

In the dance of your festival of lights  
my heart will throb and my life  
will be one with your smile.

## 69

LET my song be simple as the waking  
in the morning, as the dripping  
of dew from the leaves,  
Simple as the colours in clouds and  
showers of rain in the midnight.

But my lute strings are newly strung  
and they dart their notes like  
spears sharp in their newness.

Thus they miss the spirit of the wind  
and hurt the light of the sky ;  
and these strains of my songs  
fight hard to push back thy own  
music.

## 70

I HAVE seen thee play thy music in  
life's dancing hall ; in the sudden  
leaf-burst of spring thy laughter  
has come to greet me ; and lying  
among field flowers I have heard  
in the grass thy whisper.

The child has brought to my house  
the message of thy hope, and the  
woman the music of thy love.

Now I am waiting on the seashore to  
feel thee in death, to find life's  
refrain back again in the star  
songs of the night.



## 71.

**I REMEMBER** my childhood when the sunrise, like my play-fellow, would burst in to my bedside with its daily surprise of morning ; when the faith in the marvellous bloomed like fresh flowers in my heart every day, looking into the face of the world in simple gladness ; when insects, birds and beasts, the common weeds, grass and the clouds had their fullest value of wonder ; when the patter of rain at night brought dreams from the fairyland, and mother's voice in the evening gave meaning to the stars.

**And** then I think of death, and the rise of the curtain and the new morning and my life awakened in its fresh surprise of love.

## 72

WHEN my heart did not kiss thee in  
love, O world, thy light missed  
its full splendour and thy sky  
watched through the long night  
with its lighted lamp.

My heart came with her songs to thy  
side, whispers were exchanged,  
and she put her wreath on thy  
neck.

I know she has given thee something  
which will be treasured with thy  
stars.

## 73

THOU hast given me thy seat at thy  
window from the early hour.

I have spoken to thy silent servants  
of the road running on thy  
errands, and have sung with thy  
choir of the sky.

I have seen the sea in calm bearing

its immeasurable silence, and in storm struggling to break open its own mystery of depth.

I have watched the earth in its prodigal feast of youth, and in its slow hours of brooding shadows.

Those who went to sow seeds have heard my greetings, and those who brought their harvest home or their empty baskets have passed by my songs.

Thus at last my day has ended and now in the evening I sing my last song to say that I have loved thy world.

## 74

It has fallen upon me, the service of thy singer.

In my songs I have voiced thy spring flowers, and given rhythm to thy rustling leaves.

I have sung into the hush of thy night  
and peace of thy morning.

The thrill of the first summer rains  
has passed into my tunes, and the  
waving of the autumn harvest.

Let not my song cease at last, my  
Master, when thou breakest my  
heart to come into my house, but  
let it burst into thy welcome.

## 75

GUESTS of my life,  
You came in the early dawn, and you  
in the night,

Your name was uttered by the Spring  
flowers and yours by the showers  
of rain.

You brought the harp into my house  
and you brought the lamp.

After you had taken your leave I  
found God's footprints on my  
floor.

Now when I am at the end of my  
pilgrimage I leave in the evening  
flowers of worship my salutations  
to you all.

## 76

I FELT I saw your face, and I launched  
my boat in the dark.

Now the morning breaks in smiles  
and the spring flowers are in  
bloom.

Yet should the light fail and the  
flowers fade I will sail onward.

When you made mute signal to me  
the world slumbered and the  
darkness was bare.

Now the bells ring loud and the boat  
is laden with gold.

Yet should the bells become silent  
and my boat be empty I will sail  
onward.

Some boats have gone away and some  
are not ready, but I will not tarry  
behind.

The sails have filled, the birds come  
from the other shore.

Yet, if the sails droop, if the message  
of the shore be lost, I will sail  
onward.

## 77

“TRAVELLER, where do you go?”

“I go to bathe in the sea in the  
redd’ning dawn, along the tree-  
bordered path.”

“Traveller, where is that sea?”

“There where this river ends its  
course, where the dawn opens into  
morning, where the day droops to  
the dusk.”

“Traveller, how many are they who  
come with you?”

“I know not how to count them.

They are travelling all night with their  
lamps lit, they are singing all day  
through land and water."

" Traveller, how far is the sea ? "

" How far is it we all ask.

The rolling roar of its water swells to  
the sky when we hush our talk.

It ever seems near yet far."

" Traveller, the sun is waxing strong."

" Yes, our journey is long and grievous.  
Sing who are weary in spirit, sing who  
are timid of heart."

" Traveller, what if the night over-  
takes you ? "

" We shall lie down to sleep till the  
new morning dawns with its songs,  
and the call of the sea floats in  
the air."

## 73

COMRADE of the road,  
Here are my traveller's greetings to  
thee.

O Lord of my broken heart, of leave-  
taking and loss, of the grey silence  
of the dayfall,

My greetings of the ruined house to  
thee !

O Light of the new-born morning,  
Sun of the everlasting day,  
My greetings of the undying hope to  
thee !

My guide,  
I am a wayfarer of an endless road,  
My greetings of a wanderer to thee.

THE END





